

**Please amend the claims as follows:**

1 1. (currently amended) Apparatus for providing information ~~in~~ as a response to a query on a  
2 virtual database table, where the query and the response thereto have defined forms, the query  
3 being addressed to a database the virtual database table having appearing to have at least one  
4 row ~~one or more rows~~, each row having ~~at least one named field~~ one or more fields, the query  
5 including ~~at least one field name~~ a field name of the named fields to specify the information to be  
6 ~~provided in the response~~ and an indication of a manner of selecting a row of the row ~~containing~~  
7 ~~the information from the database table, and~~

8 the apparatus comprising:

9 a virtual database service; and

10 an information source for the information to be provided ~~which does not use the named~~  
11 ~~field to identify the information to be provided,~~

12 the virtual database service receiving the query, ~~using~~ responding to the field name and the  
13 indication of the manner of selecting a row as required to obtain the information to be provided  
14 from the information source, and providing the information ~~in~~ as the value of the field indicated by  
15 the field name in the selected row ~~the response,~~

16 whereby the apparatus presents ~~a the~~ virtual database table ~~of the form addressed by the query to a~~  
17 source of the query .

1 2. (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 1 wherein:

2 the indication of a manner of selecting a row includes a selection value; and  
3 the information source provides a component of the information to be provided in response to a  
4 match between the selection value and a pattern that matches a plurality of values and is  
5 accessible to the information source.

1 3. (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 1 wherein:

2 the query is an SQL query addressing the database table;  
3 the field name is contained in a SELECT clause in the query; and  
4 the indication of the manner of selecting a row is contained in a WHERE clause in the  
5 query.



1 4. (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 1 wherein:

2 the information source is an access evaluator which determines whether a user may have  
3 access to an information resource;

4 the manner of selecting the row includes information from which the user and the  
5 information resource may be determined; and

6 the provided information includes an indication of whether the user determined from the  
7 information may access the information resource determined therefrom.

1 5. (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 4 wherein:

2 the access evaluator determines whether the user may have access to the information  
3 resource by considering one or more access policies, each access policy indicating whether a user  
4 group may have access to a set of information resources and access by the user to the information  
5 resource being allowed when the access policies for the user groups to which the user belongs and  
6 the sets of information resources to which the information resource belongs so indicate; and

7 the manner of selecting the row contains membership information about the user from  
8 which membership of the user in a user group may be determined.

1 6. (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 5 wherein:

2 the access evaluator uses the membership information to determine membership of the user  
3 in a user group.

1 7. (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 6 wherein:

2 the access evaluator determines that there may be a user group such that membership in the  
3 user group would give the user access to the information resource; and

4 the provided information indicates a method of providing further information about the  
5 user in a further query from which the user's membership in the user group can be determined.

1 8. (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 7 wherein:

2 the further information includes authentication information which may be used to validate  
3 the user's identity.



1   **9.** (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 8 further comprising:  
2           an additional information source that is an authenticator, the authenticator using the  
3   authentication information to validate the user's identity.

1   **10.** (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 9 wherein:  
2           the response to the further query provides an indication whether the user's identity is  
3   valid.

1   **11.** (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 5 further comprising:  
2           an additional information source that is a user profile information source which provides  
3   additional information about the user;  
4           the information about the user includes a user information retrieval method specification  
5   that specifies how the user profile information source provides the additional information; and  
6           the access evaluator uses at least some of the additional information to determine  
7   membership of the user in the user group.

1   **12.** (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 5 further comprising:  
2           an additional information source that is an authenticator which validates the identity of the  
3   user;  
4           the authenticator uses the membership information to validate the identity of the user; and  
5           the access evaluator determines membership of the user in a user group only after the  
6   authenticator has validated the user's identity.

1   **13.** (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 4 further comprising:  
2           an additional information source that is an authenticator which validates an identity of the  
3   user;  
4           the manner of selecting the row includes authentication information which the  
5   authenticator uses to validate the user's identity; and  
6           the provided information is obtained at least in part from the authenticator and includes an  
7   indication of whether the user's identity is valid.



- 1   **14.** (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 4 further comprising:
- 2           an additional information source that is a user profile information source which provides
- 3   additional information about the user;
- 4           the manner of selecting the row includes profile information gathering information which
- 5   indicates to the profile information source how to gather the profile information; and
- 6           the provided information is obtained at least in part from the profile information source
- 7   and includes the profile information.